

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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TAGS: EAIR PL
SUBJ: POLISH-US AIR TRAVEL AGREEMENT

1. AN EMBASSY OFFICER RECENTLY MET WITH LUKASIK OF THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO DISCUSS PROGRESS
IN NEGOTIATIONS ON NEW AIR RATES FOR THE 1978 WINTER
SEASON.

2. IF THE NEW FARES ARE ADOPTED
BY JANUARY 15, LUKASIK SAID, THEY WILL BE EFFECTIVE FOR ONLY TWO-
AND-ONE-HALF MONTHS. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR
IMPACT ON AIR TRAVEL BETWEEN THE U.S. AND POLAND COULD
BE ASSESSED WITHIN SUCH A SHORT
TIME. HE ALSO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE DECISION
TO APPLY THESE TEMPORARY FARES TO SUMMER-SEASON TRAFFIC
WILL BE MADE NO EARLIER THAN MARCH 15. IF THIS WAS
TRUE, THE TIMING OF THE DECISION WOULD CAUSE POLISH
AIRLINES (LOT) A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY IN MARKETING
ITS TICKETS FOR SUMMER TRAVEL.

3. LUKASIK SUGGESTED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE THIS
QUESTION IS TO HAVE BILATERAL TALKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH SUCH TALKS ARE CRITICAL TO THE
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FUTURE OF THIS MARKET FOR BOTH U.S. AND POLISH AIR
CARRIERS, THE U.S. SIDE HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO
CONSULT. THE EMBASSY OFFICER
TOLD LUKASIK THAT POLAND'S UNRESPONSIVENESS TO OUR
REQUESTS FOR EASING RESTRICTIONS ON CHARTER CARRIERS
HAS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO RESOLVE THE
PROBLEM OF AIR FARES. LUKASIK PROMISED, IN RESPONSE TO

THE EMBASSY OFFICER'S SUGGESTION, TO FIND OUT WHAT SPECIFIC STEPS THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY ARE WILLING TO TAKE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE ACCESS OF CHARTER CARRIERS TO POLAND IF NEW LOW AIR FARES ARE APPROVED FOR THE SUMMER SEASON.

4. LUKASIK ADDED THAT THE GOP WOULD BE WILLING TO SEND A DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES IF THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO COME TO POLAND.

5. COMMENT: THE GOP APPEARS UNWILLING TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION ON CHARTERS UNTIL THE U.S. SIGNALS THAT THE LOW AIR-FARE STRUCTURE WILL BE EFFECTIVE FOR THE SUMMER SEASON. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IF THE POLES ARE WILLING TO MAKE A PRELIMINARY COMMITMENT ON SPECIFIC STEPS TO RELIEVE CHARTER RESTRICTIONS, WE SHOULD BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR REQUESTS FOR CONSULTATIONS. GIVEN THE DELAY IN ADOPTING THE LOWER AIR FARES, THERE MAY NOT BE A SUFFICIENT STATISTICAL BASE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE LOW AIR FARES ARE JUSTIFIED. THE DECISION TO GRANT THE LOT APPLICATION WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY BE BASED ON REGULATORY PROBLEMS THAT US CHARTER OPERATORS WILL FACE IN THE SUMMER SEASON. IF WE ARE NOT WILLING TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM, THE CHARTER OPERATORS WILL HAVE NOT ACCESS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE POLISH MARKET. IF WE TALK WITH THE POLES AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE EXPECT REAL AND IMMEDIATE CONCESSIONS ON CHARTERS, CHARTER OPERATORS, TRAVELERS, AND THE AIRLINES THEMSELVES COULD BENEFIT FROM A TIMELY AGREEMENT ON THE FARE PROBLEM.
DAVIES

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